

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 01358 271250Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /069 W

-----004042 271426Z /45

R 271153Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6919

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1358

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SU

SUBJ: NIMEIRI TALKS WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI

REF: KHARTOUM 1230

1. NIMEIRI MET PRIVATELY WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI ON EVENING OF MARCH 25 AT HOME OF FATH AL-RAHMAN BASHIR, BUSINESSMAN GO-BETWEEN WHO HAD SPENT FOUR HOURS WITH SADIQ EARLIER THAT DAY. NIMEIRI DROVE HIMSELF AND CAME ALONE. APPARENTLY GENERAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BUT NOT ALL DETAILS OF CONVERSATION ARE KNOWN.

2. SADIQ TOLD NIMEIRI THAT HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM ANSAR, PARA-MILITARY ADHERENTS OF MAHDIST SECT, TO GIVE PROPER BURIAL TO HIS UNCLE, IMAM AL-HADI AL-MAHDI, WHO WAS KILLED IN MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES IN 1969 AFTER BLOODY ASSAULT OF ABA ISLAND BY NIMEIRI'S MILITARY FORCES. IMAM AL-HADI AL-MAHDI, SPIRITUAL LEADER OF MAHDISTS, WAS PROBABLY KILLED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO FLEE TO ETHIOPIA. HIS SECRET BURIAL IS SCANDAL TO ANSARS. SADIQ WANTS NIMEIRI TO MEET WITH SONS OF DECEASED IMAM AND DISCUSS THEIR WISHES

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FOR PROPER BURIAL.

3. SADIQ ALSO ASKED NIMEIRI TO ARRANGE THAT ANSAR BE ABSORBED INTO ECONOMY. HE SUGGESTED THAT ANSAR BE GIVEN PRIORITY WHEN APPLICATIONS FOR TENANCY ARE ACCEPTED FOR LARGE IRRIGATED FARM PROJECTS IN ORDER THAT ANSAR BE GIVEN MAJORITY OF PLOTS. NIMEIRI WAS ALSO ASKED TO MEET WITH ANSAR LEADERS INCLUDING SONS OF IMAM TO

EXPLAIN OR APOLOGIZE FOR ABA ISLAND ASSAULT AND OTHER SCANDALOUS INCIDENTS.

4. COMMENT: IN SUM, SADIQ WANTS NIMEIRI TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SADIQ HAS GAINED SOMETHING BY ACCEPTING RECONCILIATION AND COOPERATING WITH NIMEIRI SINCE HIS RETURN TO SUDAN LAST OCTOBER. NIMEIRI IS EXPECTED TO COMPLY WITH SADIQ'S REQUESTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH ARE RELATIVELY COSTLESS, E.G., MEETING WITH DISGRUNTLED ANSAR LEADERS AND PRAISING SADIQ. SADIQ HAS BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM ANSAR FOLLOWING HIS ACCEPTANCE OF AMNESTY. IN COMPLEX AND PRIDEFUL UNIVERSE OF ISLAMIC SECTARIANISM HERE, DADIQ NEEDS PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND NIMEIRI CAN HELP HIM OUT.

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Message Attributes

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